

REUTERS
11 March 1983

WASHINGTON
LEAKS
BY CHARLES ALDINGER

President Reagan today intensified his crackdown on unlawful disclosures of classified information which he called a grave threat to national security.

The "Presidential Directive on Safeguarding National Security Information" sent to the Justice Department included expanded provisions for using lie detector tests on government employees and careful monitoring of agency contacts with news media.

Reagan has complained repeatedly that intentional and negligent leaks of government secrets were aiding the Soviet Union and other adversaries of the United States.

He moved to limit press access to White House staff in January and the Pentagon also ordered tighter security to prevent what some U.S. officials called a hemorrhage of classified information.

A senior administration official who briefed reporters today said the directive would require thousands of government employees with access to classified material to sign non-disclosure statements as a condition of such access.

The president ordered all departments and agencies with employees having access to classified information to revise existing regulations and policies as necessary "so that employees may be required to submit to polygraph examinations, when appropriate, in the course of investigation of unauthorized disclosure of classified information."

The president said every effort should be made to declassify information that no longer required protection in the interest of national security.

"At the same time, however, safeguarding against unlawful disclosures of properly classified information is a matter of grave concern and high priority for this administration," he said.

The U.S. government has had virtually no success in filing criminal charges regarding leaks and the directive was aimed at civil penalties ranging from withholding future security information to firing a guilty federal employee.

Only the top secret Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and National Security Agency use lie detector tests on a regular basis to check on employees.

The Justice and Defense Departments may use them in limited circumstances, but the directive would expand their possible use to dozens of other government agencies in cases involving suspected leaks of classified information.

"Appropriate policies shall be adopted to govern contacts between media representatives and agency personnel so as to reduce the opportunity for negligent or deliberate disclosure of classified information," Reagan said in his directive.

CONTINUED